

Message Text

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15
ACTION INR-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 IO-14 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03

SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15

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R 141610Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1655
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, IS, UR, XH
SUBJECT: SOVIET MEDIA ON ISRAEL

REFS: A. STATE 177005 B. MOSCOW 12402

1. SUMMARY: IN RECENT DAYS SOVIET MEDIA HAVE PLAYED UP THE
POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED MIDDLE EAST HOSTILITIES INITIATED BY
ISRAEL. HOWEVER, THE COMMENTS DO NOT YET SEEM TO CONSTITUTE
A SCARE CAMPAIGN, NOR PLEDGE THE SOVIETS TO ANY SPECIFIC
COURSE OF ACTION. END SUMMARY.

2. SOVIET MEDIA HAVE STEPPED UP THEIR REPORTING AND COMMENTARY
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ON MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS. ALMOST EVERY DAY, TASS FROM BEIRUT

CARRIES SHORT ITEMS ON ISRAELI AIR AND ARTILLERY RAIDS AGAINST SOUTHERN LEBANON. AN IZVESTIYA COMMENTARY OF AUGUST 10 SPOKE OF THESE "PROVOCATIONS" AND CHARGED THAT ISRAEL INTENDED TO WIDEN ITS ATTACKS AGAINST LEBANON AND OTHER ARAB STATES. THE COMMENTARY ALSO QUOTED ISRAELI PRESS AND GOVERNMENT COMMENTS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED FIGHTING, AND CITED ISRAELI PREPARATIONS. IT REPORTED THAT THE U.S. WAS COMMITTED TO AIDING ISRAEL MILITARILY. PRAVDA AUGUST 13 CARRIES A TASS ARTICLE FROM BEIRUT CALLED "TEL AVIV SABRE RATTLING," WHICH REPORTS INCREASED ISRAELI WAR PREPARATIONS, INCLUDING THE "TEST" MOBILIZATION OF RESERVISTS AND THE ALLEGED CONCENTRATION OF FORCES IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND THE LEBANESE BORDER.

3. ON TELEVISION, IZVESTIYA EDITOR TOLKUNOV DENOUNCED ISRAELI AGGRESSION IN GENERAL IN HIS AUGUST 11 DISCUSSION OF THE PALESTINIANS' PLIGHT (REFTEL). AND THE EVENING NEWS ON AUGUST 14 CARRIED A THREE-MINUTE CLIP ON ISRAELI WAR PREPARATIONS WHICH SHOWED WHAT APPEARED TO BE TRAINING EXERCISES INVOLVING TANKS, GRENADES AND SEVERAL ROWS OF TROOPS MOVING OVER HILLY TERRAIN.

4. COMMENT: THIS TREATMENT MARKS A DEFINITE INCREASE IN THE VOLUME AND INTENSITY OF THE SOVIET MEDIA'S ANTI-ISRAELI COVERAGE. WE WOULD NEVERTHELESS HESITATE TO CHARACTERIZE IT AS A SCARE CAMPAIGN. MOST OF THE COVERAGE HAS BEEN LIMITED TO FAIRLY STRAIGHT REPORTING OF THE RAIDS AND OF PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM ISRAEL. MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS PASSED UP THE CHANCE TO BLAST ISRAEL IN A PRAVDA COMMENTARY ON THE MEDITERRANIAN (AUGUST 14), WHICH IS LARGELY A PUFF PIECE FOR BREZHNEV'S PROPOSAL FOR DENUCLEARIZATION OF THE MED. STOESSEL

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